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ABSTRACT

Strategies are presented for including limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in learning activities designed for monolingual English-speaking students. The natural approach to language acquisition described by Krashen and Terrell is highlighted, followed by a description of the development of second language proficiency. Suggested strategies can be embedded in cooperative learning activities. Cooperative learning is discussed as a classroom management system that can help involve LEP students in learning activities (such as using nonverbal responses, assigning and rotating roles, and equalizing speaking turns) that encourage linguistic and academic growth. Techniques developed by De Avila, Kagan, and Slavin are presented in the context of those goals. Several learning strategies and lesson activities are also provided that both LEP and native English-speaking students can use together. Contains 12 references. (LB)

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Strategies for Involving LEP Students in the All-English-Medium Classroom: A Cooperative Learning Approach

Connie Cochran

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Program Information Guide Series Number 12

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Summer 1989

Introduction

English-medium classroom teachers are becoming more aware of the need to structure classroom activities to allow students at all levels of English language proficiency to participate. Limited English proficiency (LEP) students may spend part of the school day in "pull-out" ESL classes, but most of their time is spent in all-English-medium classrooms (classrooms where English is the only language of instruction used) with native English speakers. Consequently, English-medium teachers need ways to include LEP students in learning activities that are often designed for monolingual English-speaking youngsters. This Program Information Guide offers effective strategies to address this need.

This Guide consists of a brief discussion section followed by practical classroom activities. The first section highlights the natural approach to language acquisition described by Krashen and Terrell, and it describes the development of second language proficiency. In particular, it suggests some strategies, based on this approach, that an all-English-medium instructor can employ in the classroom to assist LEP students in continuing the language acquisition process begun in ESL classes. These strategies can be embedded in cooperative learning activities. The second section discusses cooperative learning, a classroom management system that can help involve LEP students in learning activities which encourage linguistic and academic growth. Techniques developed by De Avila, Kagan, and Slavin are presented in the context of those goals. Finally, the Guide presents several learning strategies and lesson activities that both LEP and native English speaking students can use in together.

Second Language Acquisition Process

Before discussing some of the ways that LEP students can participate in an all English-medium classroom, it is helpful to understand who LEP students are and how they develop English language proficiency in an academic setting. The term "limited English proficiency" refers to a range of linguistic ability that extends from having no knowledge of English to having some English language skills, but not enough to fully participate in an all-English academic setting. An LEP student can be of any age, language background, or academic achievement level. For example, one LEP student may possess a doctorate, but another may have no formal education. The only characteristic LEP students share is a measurable limitation in their English proficiency.

The process these students go through in developing English language proficiency is similar to the process of young children becoming fluent in a first language (Cochran, 1985). They listen to and "take in" a great deal of speech before they begin to speak themselves. As their speech begins to emerge, they make predictable grammatical errors which eventually are corrected through increased exposure and practice.

When children acquire a first language, they spend years refining their language knowledge. In fact, young children are still internalizing grammar and vocabulary five or six years later when they begin school. Second language learners are rarely given that much time to become fluent before they are transferred into a total English language environment. Teachers can

help students attain proficiency more efficiently by using language the same way that parents of toddlers do. Learning is enhanced by parents and teachers when they:

- Simplify communication (i.e., speak in simpler terms). Great care must be taken to ensure that in simplifying communication, the meaning of the intended message is not changed or lost.

- Talk about issues of immediate content or relevance ("here and now").

- Frequently repeat or paraphrase key words and ideas.

Teachers should expect LEP students to begin language development with a "silent period," when they can understand increasing amounts of English but are not yet ready to speak. This pre-production phase can last anywhere from a few days to a few months. During this stage, students can express their comprehension through physical responses until they are ready to respond orally. The activity section of this Guide offers suggestions for teachers which encourage this type of response.

When second language learners are ready to speak, their communication often begins with single words, such as "yes" and "no" or simple routines, such as "good morning" or "thank you." Both teachers and peers can encourage beginning speech in English when they focus on the LEP student's ability to communicate rather than correct grammatical form. The goal of initial speech is successful communication of an idea; students who can make their ideas understood by others are communicating successfully. The cooperative learning section describes how classroom activities become arenas for natural and meaningful communication.

As their speech emerges and their vocabulary grows, LEP students can be increasingly involved in class assignments by participating in reviews of basic factual material. Questions with a single correct answer such as a true/false statement, a basic mathematical computation, or a specific historical date can be answered by LEP pupils with limited oral proficiency at the early stages of speech production.

Researchers (see Krashen, 1981) indicate that students are more willing to speak (and therefore become more fluent) when they can do so in a small group rather than before the entire class. To provide a non-threatening atmosphere, teachers with LEP students can organize their classrooms to work in small groups. The next section describes how cooperative learning, a group-centered approach, can be particularly effective for involving LEP students in learning tasks.

Basic Elements of Cooperative Learning

As an alternative to traditional individualized and competitive classrooms, cooperative learning has risen in popularity in the last two decades. Slavin (1981) has shown it to be an effective learning system for both academically advanced and lower achieving students. In addition to promoting learning, this system has been found to foster respect and friendship among heterogeneous groups of students. For this reason, cooperative learning offers much to

teachers who are trying to involve LEP students in all-English-medium classroom activities. Also, some language minority students come from cultures which encourage cooperative interaction, and they may be more comfortable in an environment of shared learning.

Several elements distinguish cooperative learning from whole class instruction, individualized instruction, and traditional forms of group work. Cooperative learning includes the following basic elements:

- Heterogeneous groups of students with assigned roles to perform.
- Lessons structured for positive interdependence among group members.
- Identification and practice of specific social behaviors.
- Evaluation through whole-class wrap-up, individual testing, and group recognition.

First, cooperative learning consists of student-centered learning activities completed by students in heterogeneous groups of two to six. Through a shared learning activity, students benefit from observing learning strategies used by their peers. LEP students further benefit from face-to-face verbal interactions, which promote communication that is natural and meaningful. When students work in heterogeneous groups, issues related to the capabilities and status of group members sometimes arise (De Avila, Duncan & Navarrette, 1987); cooperative learning addresses these issues by assigning roles to each member of the group. Roles such as set up, clean up, and reporter help the group complete its tasks smoothly. They provide all members with a purpose that is separate from the academic activity and enable them to contribute to the successful completion of the learning task. By rotating assignments on a daily or weekly basis, teachers enable all students to develop skills as leaders and as helpers. The activity section of this Guide describes roles in more detail.

After establishing student learning groups, teachers must next consider structuring the lessons to create a situation of positive interdependence among the members of the groups. Several strategies encourage students to depend on each other in a positive way for their learning: limiting available materials, which creates the need for sharing; assigning a single task for the group to complete collaboratively; and assigning each student only a certain piece of the total information necessary to complete a task, such as reading only a portion of an assigned chapter or knowing only one step in a complex math problem. Students are made responsible for each others' learning and only through sharing their pieces of information will the group be able to complete an assignment. The activity section suggests some ways to create positive interdependence by structuring jigsaw lessons.

The third basic element in cooperative learning classrooms is the social behaviors necessary for success in working cooperatively. These behaviors include sharing, encouraging others, and accepting responsibility for the learning of others. They must be overtly identified by the teacher, practiced in non-threatening situations, and reinforced throughout the school year.

The fourth feature of cooperative learning is evaluation which can be done at three levels. The success of shared learning activities is judged daily in a wrap-up or processing session. At the end of the cooperative lesson, the entire class reconvenes to report on content learning and group effectiveness in cooperation. The teacher conducts a class-wide discussion in which reporters tell what happened in the group activity; successful learning strategies are shared; and students form generalizations or link learning to previously developed concepts.

Students can use the wrap-up to consider what additional information they would like to learn or other activities they would like to try in relation to the original activity. Second, teachers can recognize and reward groups for their effectiveness and cooperative spirit during the wrap-up session since wrap-up sessions assess the success of both the cooperation and the learning.

Even though students work collaboratively and become responsible for each others' learning, individuals are still held accountable for their own academic achievement. Quizzes and tests are the third level of the evaluation process. The scores students receive on tests form the basis of class grades as they do in a traditional classroom.

These basic elements of cooperative learning can be used with any type of student. Cooperative learning makes sense for teachers who have LEP pupils in their classes because all students are given frequent opportunities to speak and because a spirit of cooperation and friendship is fostered among classmates.

The next section of this Guide describes cooperative learning stategies that promote inclusion of all students and lesson activities that enhance language acquisition and academic achievement.

Activities

Teachers who use cooperative learning can select from several strategies the most appropriate one to meet the learning goal of each lesson. The following are examples of strategies that meet the needs of second language learners and enhance cooperative working behaviors.

Using Non-verbal Responses

There are several ways teachers can check students' understanding of content materials without requiring them to speak before the entire class. During a wrap-up session or before a test, teachers can conduct non-verbal reviews by:

- Calling several students to the board to simultaneously work a problem;
- Posing true/false statements to which class members respond by holding their thumbs up or down;
- Using a designated physical response (such as standing up or sitting down) to show agreement or indicate which of two options students prefer; or

- Asking students to raise previously-made flash cards in response to an identification question. (Flash card sets could consist of characters in a novel, four geographic regions, various chemical compounds, etc.)

In cooperative classrooms, teachers may designate a student from each group to respond nonverbally to questions rather than have the whole class participate at once. For example, they may call on "all quartermasters" or "everyone born in July" to answer. Language minority students responding simultaneously with their English-speaking peers feel less threatened in this type of situation and can more easily show what they know.

Assigning and Rotating Roles

Assigning roles to group members helps to delegate authority and to equalize the status of all members. The roles students perform relate to the smooth functioning of a group regardless of its learning task. Therefore, it is important for every student to understand each role and its importance to the cooperative learning system. Students with an assigned role to perform feel they share the responsiblity for the success of the group and can interact within the role as an equal to others in the group. These feelings may also encourage better attendance in students who know the learning team is depending on their presence.

Roles bring out a "work-like" attitude in students; roles in the following list reflect the world of work and encourage the group to have a sense of responsibility.

Sample Roles for Cooperative Groups

Quartermaster

Your task is to get the materials the group needs to do its work. You also make sure everything is put away and cleaned up before your group leaves the center. Quartermasters are very important to the program, and everybody depends on them to take care of materials.

Inspector

Your job is to help the group finish on time. You watch the clock and check the worksheets to be sure everyone will be ready to go to the next activity at the signal. Inspectors are important to the class, and everyone depends on them to keep the group on time.

Supervisor

You are like a shop foreman. You make sure the group works together and finishes the assignment. When the group is finished, or if it is stuck, you tell the teacher. As a supervisor, you are the leader of the group, and everybody depends on you.

Courier

You are responsible for materials that are in short supply. Some items must be shared by more than one group. Your job is to find those materials, make sure they are used quickly in your group, and pass them on. Sharing scarce materials is an important task, and everyone depends on you.

Reporter

Your job is to write what happened in your group. During the wrap-up, you will tell the whole class about the work your group did. Reporting is an important job, and everybody depends on you to help the class learn.

Equalizing Speaking Turns

When considering using learning groups in their classrooms, teachers wonder about the individual who dominates a group by out-talking the others. Teachers of LEP students, on the other hand, frequently worry that their students do not contribute enough to group discussions because of their reluctance to speak. Kagan (1989) describes a strategy that deals with both types of students by more fairly distributing conversation.

In a group discussion setting, each person uses his or her pen (pencil, or any other designated marker) as a pass to speak. The student who has something to say puts down a pen in the middle of the group. The "talking pen" then remains on the table until everyone else has had a turn to speak and has put down their pen. The goal of using talking pens is to give each group member an equal opportunity to be heard. When everyone has had a turn, all pens are picked up and another round of speaking in turn can begin.

Students who want to talk frequently will need to learn how to draw out their more reticent teammates or they will not get a second turn to speak. To help students communicate, teachers should introduce several polite protocols which students can use to encourage others. Such protocols include:

"What do you think, Juan?"
"Do you have something to add, Hector?"
"Phuong always has good ideas. What do you say, Phuong?"

Through the use of talking pens, verbally dominant students learn that they must involve others in a group discussion and will develop several polite ways to solicit their input. Reluctant or shy students, whether LEP or not, learn that their contributions are needed by the group. (The protocol, "I pass," should also be taught as a valid way to indicate that a group member has nothing more to add to the discussion.) Generally, the talking pens technique works well for all group members by making discussions more representative.

Taking Polls

Polls to determine preferences, trends, or opinions have become quite common across the United States. Students of all ages can participate in poll taking by asking each other questions about their likes, abilities, or background experiences. The repetitive nature of asking polling questions makes this an excellent language acquisition activity. If questions are carefully phrased, the predictable range of responses will also assist language minority students in conducting meaningful conversations.

The information collected from polling can be used by all students as data for math, science, or social studies classes. Data from several polls can be combined, averaged, compared over time or between age groups, and in many other ways. The data can be used to make predictions, verify claims, or report trends. Polls can also be taken as a pre-writing activity with an analysis of the findings assigned for the composition topic. Subjects for polls can be selected within a class, in the school population or from the home and community. Effective questions call for personal input from the subject and a limited range of responses. Such questions might include the following:

Do you like .....?
Do you have .....?
Can you make/play/do ....?
Have you ever .....?

Sample Lesson : Polling Your Friends

Each cooperative group selects a topic for polling classmates to determine class favorites. One group may poll for favorite colors, one for favorite rock groups, another for favorite sports and so on. Teammates divide the class among themselves to be sure everyone is polled. (They should remember to include themselves and the teacher.)

A poll form could look like this:

Question: What is your favorite car ?

Response
1. porsche
2. miata
3. jaguar
4. toyota
5. aries

For younger students the form could look like this:

Question: Do you like chocolate ice cream ?

Response:	Yes	No
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

After collecting information from everyone in the class, teammates return to their groups and complete a tally sheet compiling all the responses.

Tally Sheet

Question: _____ ?

Responses:	Number who said it
1. Porsche	III
2. Miata	⧸⧸⧸⧸
3. Jaguar	II
4.	

For a homework assignment, students can be asked to poll others outside the class on the same topic.

Homework Assignment

Ask your question of
10 people in the school or on your bus
10 people at home or in your neighborhood

Bring the new data to your group and add it to the tally sheet.

For the second lesson, the group may make a graph to show their findings. Reporters should be able to make statements about what was the most or least favorite. The wrap-up could include questions about what other information students would like to consider in polls or how they would refine the polling process.

Roundrobin

Roundrobin and Roundtable (Kagan, 1989) are simple cooperative learning techniques which can be used to encourage participation among all group members, especially LEP students. Teachers present a category to students in cooperative learning groups, and students take turns around the group naming items to fit the category. The activity is called Roundrobin when the students give answers orally. When they pass a sheet of paper and write their answers, the activity is called Roundtable.

Good topics for Roundrobin activities are those which have enough components to go at least three times around the circle with ease. Therefore, with cooperative groups of four or five students, the categories should have 12 to 15 easy answers. Topics to use for teaching and practicing Roundrobin could include:

Things that are green.
Things found in a city.
Words beginning with A.

Students are usually given a time limit, such as one or two minutes, to list as many items as they can. However, each student speaks in turn so that no one student dominates the list. Roundrobin and Roundtable often help pupils concentrate on efficiency and strategies for recall. During the wrap-up, teachers can ask the most successful team to share strategies that helped them compile their list. Other learning groups will be able to try those strategies in their next round. Roundrobin or Roundtable topics are limited only by the imagination. Here are a few sample categories for various content areas. They are ordered here from simplest (or useful in lower grades) to most advanced (or useful at higher grade levels).

Geography and Social Studies	**Language Arts and Literature**
Places that are cold	Compound words
Inventions	Past tense verbs
State capitals	Homonyms
Rivers of the US	Characters in Dr. Seuss books
Countries that grow rice	Metaphors
Rulers of England	Fictitious detectives
Lands where Spanish is spoken	Works of Shakespeare
Science	**Math**
Things made of glass	Fractions
Parts of the body	Pairs of numbers whose sum is 23
Metals	Multiples of 12
Elements weighing more than oxygen	Degrees in an acute angle
Invertebrates	Prime numbers
Essential vitamins and minerals	Important mathematicians
NASA inventions	Formulas for finding volume

Jigsaw Activities

Jigsaw activities (Slavin, 1981; Kagan, 1989) are designed to emphasize positive interdependence among students. A jigsaw lesson is created by dividing information to be mastered into several pieces and assigning each member of the cooperative group responsibility for one of those pieces.

For example, in a study of planets, one student would be responsible for finding out the mass and major chemical elements on each planet; another would be responsible for distances from the sun and between planets and their orbits; a third student would find out the origin of planet names; and the fourth would research satellites. After reading the appropriate chapter in the textbook, students become experts on that one aspect of their study unit. In class, the following day, students meet with other classmates who had the same assignment in expert groups. These groups review, clarify, and enhance their understanding of the topic before returning to their cooperative teams. Once students return, they are responsible for "teaching" the information to their teammates and adding their piece to the jigsaw puzzle.

There are a number of ways to "develop" expertise in student team members. In the method described above, all students read the same material, a chapter in the text, but each focuses on a specific area. Expertise can also be formed by giving individual students a part of the total information to share with the others. This second method may involve only a short reading assignment and may be more useful for LEP students or native English speakers who are at low reading levels.

For example, if the learning task were to punctuate a group of sentences, each student on the team could be given a few of the rules for punctuation. The team would have to share their rules with each other in order to complete the task. This same kind of division could be made of steps in a sequence or clues to a mystery. By dividing the information into a jigsaw activity, the teacher ensures that students become positively interdependent on each other to complete the assignment. Each individual feels important because he or she holds a key to the solution and the other group members actively encourage him or her to share it.

The following lessons are examples of jigsaw activities. The first two are logic problems with different clues given to each group member. They are appropriate at the second or third grade level. The next is a jigsaw activity of comma rules with a worksheet of sentences for the group to punctuate. It is designed for intermediate or middle school grades. The last jigsaw activity is a guided reading assignment for use with a content textbook chapter and could be used at a secondary level.

Sample Lesson: Jigsaw Logic Problem I

Logic problems can easily be divided into jigsaw activities by separating the various pieces of information and clues. The following logic problem is first presented as a whole, then split into a jigsaw activity.

Marie, David, and Luc got report cards yesterday. Each student received only one A and each was in a different subject: either math, English, or history. The subject in which each student got the A is his or her favorite subject. From the clues below, tell which subject is each student's favorite.

1. Marie's favorite subject is the one David hates.
2. Luc knows all the times tables and loves long division.
3. David got a D in history.

Student 1	**Student 2**
Marie, David, and Luc got report cards yesterday. Each student received only one A. Marie's favorite subject is the one David hates.	Marie, David, and Luc got report cards yesterday. The subject in which each student got an A is his or her favorite subject. Luc knows all the times tables and loves long division.
Student 3	**Student 4**
Marie, David, and Luc got report cards yesterday. Problem: Which subject is the favorite of each student.	Marie, David, and Luc got report cards yesterday. The A's were only in math, English, and history. David got a D in history.

Solution: Luc got an A in math (clue 2).
Marie got an A in history (clues 1 and 3).
David got an A in English (process of elimination).

Sample Lesson: Jigsaw Logic Problem II

Student 1

Your group has a problem to solve.
You may share this information with your group, but only you may read it.

Ana, Tien, and Juana live next door to each other

The girl with the cat taps on Ana's wall when her TV is too loud.

Student 2

Your group has a problem to solve.
You may share this information with your group, but only you may read it.

Tien lives in the middle apartment.

Problem: Find out which pet belongs to each girl.

Student 3

Your group has a problem to solve.
You may share this information with your group, but only you may read it.

One girl has a cat; another has a dog; and the third has a goldfish.

These girls live in an apartment house.

Student 4

Your group has a problem to solve.
You may share this information with your group, but only you may read it.

The girl with the dog calls Juana on the phone every day.

Ana has to walk to the end of the hall to reach the apartment with the goldfish.

Student 5 (optional)

Your group has a problem to solve.
You may share this information with your group, but only you may read it.

Each girl has a different pet.

Tien's pet eats more food than the other two pets.

Solution: Anna lives with the dog in the first apartment.
Tien, in the middle apartment, has a cat.
Juana lives at the end of the hall with a goldfish as a pet.

Sample Lesson: Jigsaw Activity on Comma Rules

Each student is given one quarter of this page or 2 comma rules and examples. The learning group has one copy of the practice worksheet to complete jointly.

Student 1	**Student 2**
Use commas to separate elements in a series.	*Use commas to separate details.*
I pass the supermarket, church, park, and post office on my way to school.	She was five feet, four inches. Today is October 14, 1989.
Use commas to set off inserted material.	*Use commas to set off introductory material.*
Remember, Frank, be home by 11:30.	On the contrary, his wife is quite intelligent.
Student 3	**Student 4**
Use commas to promote clarity.	*Use commas with direct quotations.*
Whatever you say, tomorrow I will begin my diet.	"Come home early," she said.
Use commas to set off verb phrases.	*Use commas before coordinating conjunctions.*
The D.J. forgot to bring rock videos, thus completely ruining my party.	They always serve caviar, and I dislike fish.

Comma Practice Worksheet

Punctuate the following sentences with commas where needed.

1. My grandmother every Tuesday bought her groceries.
2. She always bought fruit meat vegetables and milk.
3. Pushing her cart through the aisles she would often find a new product to try.
4. Old fashioned though she was Grandmother loved to try every new food cleanser and medicine on the market.
5. Soon the grocery cart loaded with food would be too heavy for grandmother to push.

6. One day she actually bumped into another shopper whom she could not see through the pile in her cart.

7. "Madam" the irate gentleman said "you have just run over my swollen arthritic toe in your haste to get down the aisle."

8. "In that case kind sir" replied grandmother "would you like to try this new cold pack that claims to reduce swelling? I found it in aisle nine."

9. "If it works on my foot Madam I will take you dancing tonight" he answered.

10. The cold pack worked they went dancing and next Tuesday Grandmother is getting married to that spiritly young-hearted gentleman.

Sample Lesson: Jigsaw Guided Reading Assignment

All students are assigned to read a chapter in the text. Each student is given one of the following tasks in connection with reading.

Student A: Read the assigned chapter and find three examples of cause and effect.

Student B: Read the assigned chapter and write three questions you would ask if you could speak to one of the people discussed in the readings (or the author of the text).

Student C: Read the assigned chapter and find three ideas that are similar to things we learned in the last chapter.

Student D: Read the assigned chapter and find three ideas that are new or different from others we have studied.

Student E: Read the assigned chapter and write three new words that you did not know.

In the following class session, all students A meet together to pool information. All students B, C, and D meet as well for five or ten minutes to clarify and expand their ideas. Finally, students A - E return to their own cooperative learning group and share the information they got from the chapter as well as from the expert group. Each cooperative team is then assigned to write three possible quiz questions for the chapter. The team must know the answers to their own questions because the teacher compiles the items and administers the quiz to the class.

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